

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7504

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 1526

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EINV, PFOR, US, CT

SUBJECT: DDI/SCED DISPUTE

REF: BANGUI 1407

1. DDI DIRECTOR COPPERMAN HAS INFORMED ME THAT HE WAS ABLE TO DISCUSS SCED DISPUTE WITH MINISTER BANGUI-TANDET ON MORNING OF AUGUST 16. COPPERMAN DREW TO MINISTER'S ATTENTION DRAMATIC FALL IN DIAMOND PRODUCTION OVER LAST SIX MONTHS, EQUAL TO PREVIOUS SCED PRODUCTION. COPPERMAN SAID HE ASKED BANGUI-TANDET WHETHER JOLIS SHOULD COME TO BANGI FOR DISCUSSION, STATING THAT JOLIS WOULD ONLY COME IF THERE WAS SOME ASSURANCE HE WOULD NOT BE FACED WITH CONFRONTATION SITUATION AND WOULD IN FACT BE ABLE TO HAVE PERSONAL DIALOGUE WITH THE PRESIDENT.

2. BANGUE-TANDET REPORTEDLY REPLIED BY REFERRING TO MY CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT BOKASSA (REFTEL) AT WHICH BANGUI-TANDET WAS PRESENT AND SAID THAT PRESIDENT HAD INDICATED HIS DESIRE TO MEET WITH SCED REPRESENTATIVE. HE ASSURED COPPERMAN THAT DIALOGUE WAS DESIRED AND THAT JOLIS WOULD RUN NO RISK AS TO HIS PERSONAL SAFETY IF HE WERE TO COME TO BANGUI.

3. I TOLD COPPERMAN THAT IN MY VIEW THE TIME HAD NOW ARRIVED FOR JOLIS TO COME TO BANGUI. THE PRESIDENT HAD TAKEN A POSITIVE POSITION IN MY MEETING AND THIS HAD NOW BEEN RECONFIRMED TO COPPERMAN BY ONE OF BOKASSA'S CLOSEST ADVISORS.

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4. IT IS, OF COURSE, NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT WITH ANY CERTAINTY HOW NEGOTIATIONS WILL EVOLVE OR WHETHER TWO SIDES WILL BE ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON RESUMPTION OF SCED ACTIVITIES, PARTICULARLY IN AREA OF ARTISANAL TRAINING, OR ON TERMINATION. HOWEVER, IN ABSENCE OF A JOLIS VISIT. PROGRESS IS UNLIKELY. GIVEN USG'S CURRENT INVOLVEMENT, AS A RESULT OF MY DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT, FAILURE TO BEGIN DIALOGUE COULD IMPACT ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. IT IS, THEREFORE, IMPORTANT IN MY VIEW THAT SCED PICK UP BOKASSA'S OFFER OF NEGOTIATIONS IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE.
QUAINTON

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